A SERMON

Before the

QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL,

MAY 29. 1692.

By *F. ATTERBURY*, Student of *Christ-Church.*

Published by Her Majesty's Special Command.

LONDON,

Printed for *Tho. Bennet* at the *Half-Moon* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1692.

A

PSAL. L. 14.

Offer unto God Thanksgiving.

AMong the many Excellencies of this pious Collection of Hymns, (for which so particular a Value has been set upon it, by the Church of God in all Ages,) This is not the Least, that the true Price of Duties is there justly stated; Men are call'd off from resting in the Outward Shew of Religion, in Ceremonies and Ritual Observances; and taught rather to practise (that which was meant by these things, and to which they were design'd to lead,) sound, inward Vertue and Piety.

The several Composers of these Hymns were *Prophets*; Men, whose Business it was, not onely to foretell Events, for the Benefit of the Church in succeeding Times; but to correct and reform also what was amiss in the present Race of Men, with whom they liv'd and convers'd: To preserve a foolish People from Idolatry, and false Worship; To rescue the Law from corrupt Glosses, and the superstitious Uses which were

made of it: And to put Men in mind of (what they were so willing to forget) that Eternal and Invariable Rule, which was before these *Positive* Duties, and would be after e'm, and was to be observ'd even Then in preference to 'em.

The Discharge, I say, of this part of the Prophetick Office, taking up so large a room in the Book of *Psalms*, has been one reason, (among many others) why they have been always so highly esteem'd of: Because we are from hence furnish'd with such an Account of things, as takes off the Exceptions of those unreasonable Men, who run down all reveal'd Religion, as a *Pretence* and a *Trick*, from what they imagine they see of it, in that of the *Jews*. The whole of which they first suppose to lie in Outward Performances; and then easily perswade themselves, that God could never be the Authour of such a mere Piece of Pageantry, and Empty Formality: That it could never be agreeable to the Divine Nature, to delight to be worship'd by a Company of wild and unaccountable Ceremonies.

Which Objection of Theirs we should not know what to say to, unless we could prove out

out of the *Psalms*, and other parts of Prophetick Writing, that the *Jewish Religion* was something more than bare Outside and Shew.—And that Inward Purity, and Spiritual Devotion was a Duty Then too, as well as Now.

One great Instance of this Proof is in the words now before us, which are taken out of a Psalm of *Asaph's*, written on purpose to set out the weakness and worthlessness of external Performances, when compar'd with more vital and substantial Duties.

To enforce which Doctrine, God himself is brought in as delivering it. *Hear, O my People, and I will speak: O* Israel, *and I will testifie against thee: I am God, even thy God.* The Preface is very solemn, and therefore that which it ushers in, we may be sure, is of no common Importance. *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-Offerings, to have been continually before me.* That is, I will not So reprove thee, as if These were the Only, or the Chief Things I requir'd of thee. *I will take no Bullock out of thy house, nor He-goat out of thy folds.* I prescrib'd thee not Sacrifices for my Own sake, because I needed 'em: *For every Beast of the Forest is mine,*

mine, and the Cattle upon a thousand Hills. Mine they are, and were, before ever I commanded Thee to offer 'em to me; so that (as it follows,) *If I were hungry, yet would I not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.* But can ye be so gross and Senseless, as to think me liable to Hunger and Thirst? as to imagine that wants of *that* kind can touch me? *Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats?* — Thus does he expostulate severely with 'em, after the most graceful manner of the Eastern Poetry. The Issue of which is a plain and full Resolution upon the Case, in those few words of the Text. — *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.* Would you do your Homage in the most agreeable way? would you render the most acceptable of Services? *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.*

The use I intend to make of these words is, from hence, to raise some Thoughts, about that very excellent and important (but much neglected) Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving: A Subject not unfit to be discours'd of at this Time; whether we consider, either the more than ordinary Coldness that appears a-late in Mens Tempers, towards the practice of This (or any other)

part

part of a warm and affecting Devotion; The Great Occasion of setting aside This particular Day in the Kalendar, some years ago: Or the Fresh Instances of mercy and goodness, which God even Now has been pleas'd to bestow upon us. Answering at last the many *Prayers* and *Fastings*, by which we have besought him so long for the Establishment of Their Majesties Throne, and for the Success of their Arms: and giving us at length an Opportunity of appearing before him, in the more delightful part of our Duty; *in the voice of Praise and Thanksgiving, among such as keep Holy days.*

Offer unto God Thanksgiving.

Which that we may do, let us enquire first what is meant by offering Praise and Thanksgiving unto God, and then how reasonable it is, that we should do so.

Our Enquiry into what is meant here, will be very short: For who is there, that understands any thing of Religion, but knows; that to offer Praise and Thanks to God is, to have a lively and devout Sense of his Excellencies, and of his Benefits; to recollect 'em with Humility and Thankfulness of heart; and to express these Inward Affec-

ons by ſuitable Outward Signs of 'em; by reverent and lowly Poſtures of Body, by Songs and Hymns, and Spiritual Ejaculations: either Privately or Publickly; either in the Cuſtomary and Daily Service of the Church, or in its more Solemn Appointments, upon extraordinary occaſions. This is the Account which every Chriſtian eaſily gives himſelf of it; and which therefore it would be needleſs to enlarge upon. I ſhall only take notice on this Head; that Praiſe and Thanſgiving do, in ſtrictneſs of Speech, ſignifie Things ſomewhat different. Our *Praiſe* is properly terminated on God, on the Account of his natural Excellencies and Perfections; and is that, by which we give Honour to all his ſeveral Attributes; but *Thanksgiving* is a narrower Duty, and Imports only, a grateful Senſe and Acknowledgment of paſt Mercies. We praiſe God for all his glorious Acts, of every kind, that regard either us, or other men; for his very *Vengeance*, and thoſe Judgments which he ſometimes ſends abroad in the Earth: But we thank him only for the Inſtances of his *Goodneſs*; and for Such only of thoſe, as We our ſelves are concern'd in. This, I ſay, is what the

the Two words ſtrictly mean: but ſince the Language of Scripture is generally leſs exact; and uſes either of 'em often, to expreſs the other by, I ſhall not therefore think my ſelf obliged, in what follows, thus nicely always to diſtinguiſh 'em.

Now the great *Reaſonableneſs* of this Duty of Praiſe or Thankſgiving, and Our ſeveral *Obligations* to it will appear; if we either conſider it *abſolutely* in it ſelf, as the Debt of our Natures; or *compare* it with other Duties, and ſhew the Rank it bears amongſt 'em: Or ſet out, in the laſt place, ſome of its peculiar *Properties* and *Advantages*, with regard to the devout Performer of it.

Praiſe and Thankſgiving, conſider'd abſolutely in themſelves, are, I ſay, the Debt, and the very Law of our Nature. We had ſuch Faculties on purpoſe beſtowed on us, as made us fit to ſatisfie this Debt, and to obey this Law: And they therefore never work more naturally and freely, than when they are thus employ'd.

'Tis one of the oldeſt pieces of Reaſoning, that Philoſophy has acquainted us with; and which has ever ſince been taught and

kept up by the wiſeſt Men of all Ages, that the Original Deſign of making Man was, that he might Praiſe and Honour Him that made him.

Whe God had finiſht this goodly Frame of things we call the World, and put together the ſeveral parts of it, according to the Skill of his infinite Wiſdom, in exact Number, Weight, and Meaſure; there was ſtill wanting a Creature in theſe lower Regions, that could apprehend the Beauty, Order, and exquiſite Contrivance of it: that from contemplating the Gift, might be able to lead it ſelf up to the great Giver; and do Honour to all his Attributes.

Every Thing indeed, that God made, did, in ſome Sence, glorifie its Author; inaſmuch as it carried upon it the plain Mark and Impreſs of the Deity; and was an Effect worthy of that firſt Cauſe from whence it flow'd: And Thus might the *Heavens* be ſaid, at the firſt moment in which they ſtood forth, *To declare his Glory, and the Firmament to ſhew his Handy work.* But this was an imperfect, and an improper Glory: The Sign ſignify'd to no purpoſe here Below, where there was no Body to take notice of it.

Man

Man therefore was fram'd to supply this want; [illegible]d with Powers fit to find out, and to acknowledge these unlimited Perfections: and then put into this Temple of God, this Lower World, as the Priest of Nature, to offer up the Incense of Thanks and Praise for the mute and the insensible Part of the Creation.

This I say has been the Opinion all along of the most thoughtful Men down from the most Ancient Times: And tho' it carry no Demonstration in't, yet is it what we cannot but agree to, if we will but allow that Man was made for some End or Other; and that he is capable of perceiving that End. For then, let us search, deliberate, and enquire never so much, we shall find no other Account of him, that we can rest upon so well. If we say he was made purely for the good Pleasure of God, and because He would have it so, this is, *in effect*, to say, that he was made for no End; or for none that we can discern.

If we say again, That he was design'd as an Instance of the Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness of God, this indeed may be the Reason of his *Being* in general;

For

For 'tis the common Reason of [illegible] Being of every thing besides. But it [illegible] no Account, why he was made *such* a [illegible]g as he is, a reflecting, thoughtful, inquisitive Being: The *particular* Reason of this must be drawn from the Praise and Honour that was to be given to God by him, if we will have any Reason at all of it.

This therefore is the Debt and Law of our Nature. And it will more *distinctly* appear to be such, if we consider the two Ruling Faculties of our Mind, The *Understanding* and the *Will*, apart; in both which it is deeply founded: in the Understanding, as in the Principle of Reason, that owns and acknowledges it; in the Will, as in the Fountain of Gratitude and Return, which violently constrains us to pay it.

Reason was given us as a Rule and Measure to value things by: by the help of which we were to proportion our Esteem of every thing, according to the Degrees of Perfection and Goodness that were in it. It cannot therefore, if it does its Office at all, but apprehend God as the best and most perfect being; it must necessarily own and give him the Honour of his infinite Perfections.

And

And th[illegible] what is *strictly* meant by *Praise*: which [illegible]fore is express'd often in Scripture by [illegible]*ssing* to *God*, and *acknowledging* him; by *ascribing* to him what is his Due: And as far as This Sence of the word goes, 'tis impossible to *think* of God without praising him. For it depends not on the Understanding (on a sound and uncorrupted Understanding, I mean) how it shall apprehend things, any more than it does on the Eye, how its Objects shall appear to it.

The Duty takes a further and surer hold of us, by the means of our *Will*, and that strong bent towards *Gratitude*, which the Authour of Nature has fix'd there. There is not a more active Principle, than This, in Man; and That surely which deserves its utmost Force, and should set all its Springs a-work, is God; that Great and Universal Benefactour, from whom we receiv'd every thing, we either are or have; and to whom we can possibly repay nothing, but our Praises, or (to speak more properly on this Head, and according to the strict Import of the Word) our Thanksgivings. *Who hath given to God* (says the great Apostle in his usual Figure) *and it shall be recompenc'd unto*

him?

him? A Gift it ſeems always requires a Recompence--. Nay, but *of him, through him, and to him are all things*;--*Of him*, as the Authour; *through him*, as the Preſerver and Governour; *to him*, as the End and Perfection: *To whom therefore*, (as it follows) *be Glory for ever*, Amen!

Gratitude conſiſts in an equal Return of Benefits, if we are able; or of Thanks if we are not. Which Thanks, therefore muſt riſe always as the Favours receiv'd are in Proportion great, and the Receiver incapable in Degree of making any other Sort of Requital. Now ſince no Man has benefited God at any Time, and yet every Man in each Moment of his Life, is continually benefitted by him; what ſtrong Obligations muſt we needs be under to thank Him?

'Tis true, our Thanks are really as little worth to him, as any other kind of Return would be: In themſelves indeed they are ſo; But his Goodneſs has made 'em otherwiſe: He has declar'd he will accept 'em in lieu of the vaſt Debt we owe. And after that, which is fitteſt for us, to diſpute how they come to be an *Equivalent*, or to pay 'em?

This

It is therefore the Voice of Nature, as far as Gratitude it self is so, that the Good Things, we receive from above, should be sent back again thither in Thanks and Praises; *As the Rivers run into the Sea; to the place* (the Ocean of Beneficence) *from whence these Rivers came, thither should they return again.*

We have consider'd the Duty *absolutely*, we are now to *compare* it with others, and to see what Rank it bears among 'em. And Here we shall find, that among all the Acts of Religion immediately addressed to God, this is much the Noblest, and most Excellent. And indeed, if what has been laid down be allow'd, That the end of Mans Creation was to praise and glorifie God, it must needs be so. For That cannot but be the most noble and worthy Act of any Being, which is the very End and Design of it. Other parts of Piety, such as *Confession* and *Prayer*, were not Originally design'd for Man, nor Man for Them: They imply *Guilt* and *Want*, with which the *State of Innocence* was not acquainted. Had Man continu'd in That, his Worship had been all paid to Heaven in pure Acts

of Thanksgiving. And he had had nothing to do, but to enjoy the Goods of Life, as Nature directed, and to praise the God of Nature that bestowed 'em. But being fallen from Innocence and Abundance; having contracted Guilt, and forfeited his Right to all sorts of Mercies; Prayer and Confession became necessary, for a time, to retrieve the Loss, and to restore him again to that State, where he should be able to live without 'em. These are fitted therefore for a lower Dispensation: before 'em in Paradise, there was nothing but Praise; and after 'em too, there shall be nothing but that in Heaven. Our perfect State did at first, and will at last consist in That: and therefore That is the Excellence and the Honour of our Nature.

'Tis the Same Argument, which the Apostle hath us'd for the preference of Charity, to Faith and Hope, and every Spiritual Gift. *Charity faileth not*, says he; that is, is not a Vertue useful only in this Life, but will go along with us also into the next: *But whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be Tongues, they shall cease; whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

These

These are Gifts of a Temporary Advantage, and shall all perish in the using. *For we know in part, and we prophesie in part*—Our present State is imperfect, and therefore what belongs to That, and onely That, must be imperfect too. *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

The same Argument, we see, that sets Charity above the rest of Christian Graces, will give Praise also the Pre-eminence over the other Parts of Christian Worship; and we may conclude our reasoning therefore, as He does his: *And now abideth Confession, Prayer and Praise; these three: But the greatest of these is Praise.*

It is so certainly on other Accounts, as well as this: Particularly, as it is the most *disinteressed* part of our Religious Service, Such as has the most of God, and the least of our selves in it, of any we pay: And therefore approaches the nearest of any to a pure, and free, and perfect Act of Homage.

For, though a good Action does not grow immediately worthless by being done with the Prospect of Advantage, as some have

ſtrangely imagin'd; yet it will be allow'd, I ſuppoſe, that its being done without the Mixture of that End, recommends it ſo much the more, and raiſes the Price of it. *Does Job ſerve God for nought?* was an Objection of Satan's, which imply'd, that thoſe Duties were moſt valuable, where our own Intereſt was leaſt aim'd at: And God ſeems, by the Commiſſion he then gave him to try Experiments upon *Job*, thus far to have allow'd his Plea.

Now our Acknowledgments and Requeſts are purely for our ſelves: our own Intereſt is the direct Aim of them. But Praiſe is a generous and unmercenary Principle, which propoſes no other End to it ſelf, but to do, as is fit for a Creature endow'd with ſuch Faculties, to do towards the perfecteſt and moſt beneficent of Beings; and to pay the willing Tribute of our Honour there, where the Voice of Reaſon directs us to pay it.

God has indeed annexed a Bleſſing to the Duty, and when we know this, we cannot chuſe in the Act of Praiſe, but have ſome Regard to it. However that is not our direct Aim in it, nor was it the firſt Motive

that ſtirr'd us up to it. Had it been ſo, we ſhould naturally have had Recourſe unto Prayer, and breath'd out our Deſires in That Form which moſt properly belongs to them.

In ſhort, Praiſe is our moſt Excellent Work; a Work common to the Church Triumphant and Militant, and which lifts us up into a Communion and Fellowſhip with Angels. The Matter of it is always the Perfection of God's Nature; and the Act it ſelf, is the Perfection of Ours.

I come now, in the laſt Place, to ſet out ſome of its peculiar *Properties and Advantages*, which recommend it to the Devout Performer. And First—

It is the moſt *pleaſant* part of our Devotions. It proceeds always from good Humour, and a Chearful Temper of Mind; and it cheriſhes, and promotes it mightily in us. *For it is good to ſing Praiſes to the Lord*, (ſays One, whoſe Experience in this Caſe, we may rely upon) *for it is pleaſant, and Praiſe is comely.* Prayer and Penitence are the Language of the Indigent and the Guilty; the Breathings of a Sad and a Contrite Spirit;

Is

Is any afflicted? let him pray. But — *Is any merry? let him sing Psalms.*

The most natural and lively way of Mens expressing the Mirth of their Hearts, is in a Song. And Songs are the very Language of Praise: Appropriated peculiarly to this End in Religion, and scarce of any other Use in it. Indeed the whole Composition of this Duty is such, as throughout speaks Ease and Delight to the Mind.

It proceeds from *Love*, and from *Thankfulness*. From *Love*, the very Fountain of Pleasure; the Passion, which gives every thing we do or enjoy, its Relish and Agreeableness.

From *Thankfulness*, which involves in it the Memory of past Benefits; the actual Presence of them to the Mind, and the repeated Enjoyment of 'em.

And as its *Principle* is, such is its *End* also. For it procureth Quiet and Ease to the Mind, by doing somewhat towards satisfying that Debt, which it labours under; by delivering it of those Thoughts of Praise and Gratitude, those Exultations it is so full of; and which would grow uneasie and troublesome to it, if they were kept in. If the

Thank-

Thankfull *refrain'd, it would be Pain and Grief to him:* But then, then is his *Soul satisfy'd as with Marrow and Fatness, when his Mouth praiseth God with Joyfull Lips.*

It is another great Effect of Praise, that it enlarges the Powers and Capacities of our Soul; turning 'em off from little and low things, upon their Greatest and Noblest Object, the Divine Nature; and employing 'em in searching out all the Wonders of it. We see what difference there is between Man and Man, such, as there is hardly greater between Man and Beast: And this proceeds all from the different Sphere of Thought which they Act in, and the different Objects they converse with. The Mind is Essentially the same in the Peasant and the Prince, the Forces of it naturally equal in the untaught Man, and the Philosopher: Only the one is busied in mean Affairs, and within narrower Bounds; the Other Exercises himself in Things of weight and moment: And This it is, that puts the wide distance between 'em. Noble Objects are to the Mind, what the Sun-beams are to a Bud or Flower: They open and

unfold,

unfold, as it were, the Leaves of it; put it upon exerting and ſpreading it ſelf every way; and call forth all thoſe Powers, that lie hid and locked up in it. The Praiſe and Admiration of God therefore brings this Advantage along with it, that it ſets our Faculties upon their full Stretch, and improves 'em to all the Degrees of Perfection, of which they are capable.

It (farther) Promotes in us, an exquiſite Senſe of God's Honour; and an high Indignation of Mind, at every thing, that openly profanes it. For what we value and delight in, we cannot with Patience hear ſlighted or abus'd. Our Own Praiſes, which we are conſtantly putting up, will be a *Spur* to us to procure the Glory of God in every Other inſtance of it: and will make us ſet our Faces againſt all open and avow'd Impieties. Which methinks ſhould be conſider'd a little by thoſe Men, who can be ſilent under the fouleſt diſhonours done to Religion, and its great Authour. For tamely to hear God's Name blaſphemed by Others, is no very good Argument, that we have been us'd to Honor and Reverence him in good earneſt, Our ſelves

It

It will (beyond all this) work in us a deep Humility; and a Conſciouſneſs of our own Imperfections. Upon a frequent Attention to God and his Attributes, we ſhall eaſily diſcover our own Weakneſs and Emptineſs: Our ſwelling thoughts of ourſelves will abate; and we ſhall ſee and feel, that we are lighter, to be laid in the Ballance, than even Vanity it ſelf. And This is a Leſſon, which, to the moſt part of Mankind, is, I Think, very well worth learning. We are naturally Preſumptuous and Vain; full of Ourſelves, and regardleſs of every thing beſides: Eſpecially, when ſome little Outward Privileges diſtinguiſh Us from the reſt of Mankind; then, 'tis odds, but we look into Ourſelves with great degrees of Complacency; and are wiſer and better every way, without doubt, than *ſeven Men, that can render a Reaſon.* Now nothing will contribute ſo much to the Cure of this Vanity, as a due Attention to God's Excellencies, and to the Praiſe of 'em. By comparing Theſe with our Own, we ſhall learn *not to think of our ſelves more highly than we ought to think of Ourſelves; but*

to think soberly: We shall find more satisfaction in looking upwards, and humbling Ourselves before Our common Creator, than in casting Our Eyes downward with Scorn upon our Fellow-Creatures, and setting at nought any part of the Work of his Hands. The vast distance we are at, from Real and Infinite Worth, will astonish us so much, that we shall have no Mind to value Ourselves on those lesser Degrees of Pre-eminence, that Custom, or Opinion, or some little accidental Advantages have given Us over other Men.

I shall mention but one Use of it more, and 'tis This; That a conscientious Praise of God will keep Us back from all false and mean Praises, all Fulsome and Servile Flatteries, such as are in use among Men. Praising, as 'tis commonly manag'd, is nothing else but a Tryal of Skill upon a Man, how many good Things we can possibly say of him. All the fine Characters that ever were made, are heap'd together, and thrown into One, for His sake. And no matter, whether it belongs to him, or not; so there

there be but enough on't. Which is one deplorable Instance (among a thousand) of the Baseness of humane Nature; its small regard to Truth and Justice; to Right, or Wrong; to what is, or is not to be prais'd.

But He, who has a deep Sense of the Excellencies of God upon his Heart, will make a God of nothing besides: He will give every thing its just Encomium, Honour where Honour is due; and as much as is due, because it is his Duty to do so: but the Honour of God will suffer him to go no further. Which Rule, if it had been observ'd, a Neighbouring Prince, (who now, God be thanked, needs Flattery something more than ever he did) would have wanted a great deal of that Incense that has been pay'd him.

Upon these Grounds does the Duty of Praise stand, and these are the Obligations that Tye us to the Performance of it.

'Tis the End of our being, and the very Rule and Law of Our Nature; flowing from the Two great Fountains of humane Action, the Understanding and the Will, naturally, and almost necessarily. It is the

most Excellent part of our Religious Worship; enduring to Eternity, when the rest are to be done away; and pay'd even Now after the frankest manner, with the least regard to Our own Interest. It recommends it self to us by several peculiar Properties, that Belong to it: As it carries more Pleasure in it, than all other Kinds of Devotion; as it enlarges and exalts all the Powers of the Mind; as it breeds in Us an exquisite Sense of God's Honour, and a Willingness to promote it in the World: as it learns us to be Humble and Lowly Ourselves; and yet preserves us from the Baseness of Flattery, from bestowing mean and undue Praises upon Others.

A great deal more might be said for it, if This were not sufficient: For no Subject affords more Room for our Praises, than the Praise of God it self, if we had leisure to pursue it.

I shall now shut up the Arguing part of this Discourse, with a short Application to Two sorts of Persons; the *Careless*, and the *Profane*. One of which Neglects the Practise of

of so Important a Duty, and the other lives in Defiance of it.

A *Neglect* in this Case, is certainly the Grosseſt that can be: 'Tis (we see) the Neglect of our Duty, our Honour, our Intereſt, and our Pleasure all at once. 'Tis to omit doing that which we were purposely sent into the World to doe: And without doing which, all the other Affairs of Life are but one continued Impertinence. That, which we have so many Obligations to doe, and no Excuse for leaving undone: For Praise is within every Man's Reach: There is no One but has it in his Power to be Thankfull.

God commanded the *Jews* to acknowledge his Sovereignty and Beneficence, by Sacrifices, a Costly and a Troublesome way of Worship. Of Us he requires onely the Cheap and Easie Offering of Our Thanks and Praises--And shall we not pay it? Alas! we do not! Every thing proves an hindrance to us in the way to this our Bounden Duty and Service: We are too idle or too busie to attend upon it.

And

And even when we find Leisure enough; yet how cold and how insensible are we whilst 'tis going forward! *We draw nigh unto him with our Lips* (perhaps) *but our Hearts are far from him.* And do we then know what it is to praise God becomingly? Do we remember how the great Teacher of Thanksgiving summons up every One of his Faculties to assist him in it? *Praise the Lord O my Soul! and all that is within me, praise his holy Name!* 'Tis a Work that will employ *all that is within us*, that will call for all the Application, and Vigor, and Warmth, that we can possibly bestow upon it. Cold, unmov'd Praise, is no Praise! the Sacrifice of it can be no longer acceptable than 'tis burning.

To those Men who live in the *Contempt* of this Duty, we have also something to say, if they would but hear us. They are generally such, as pretend a high Sense of the Dignity of humane Nature, and bear no small Respect to their own Understandings. Now, though Other Parts of Religious Worship should happen to be too mean and low for such great Minds to take up with;

with; yet This, methinks, might deserve to be thought equal to 'em.

Let Confession and Prayer go only for the Arts of Winning and Begging, and be as much beneath 'em as they imagine, yet surely Praise has something so great and so noble in it, that they cannot look down upon it. 'Tis a Subject fit for the most enlarg'd Capacities to dwell on; and such an One, as even Those would certainly find themselves rais'd and improv'd by.

If it were possible for These Men to have a Relish of any thing of this Kind, we would desire 'em to make the Trial: To take the *Te Deum* into their Hands, and to read it attentively; and then tell us truly, whether they did not find their Minds fill'd, and their Affections strangely rais'd by the Images they met there: Whether they did not perceive themselves to be somewhat above themselves, in the using it. And all this done by that Majestick Plainness and Simplicity of Thought that goes through it! Unadorn'd by Words! Unenliven'd by Figures! 'Tis the Matter alone which supports the Expression: And because that

Matter

Matter is pure, genuine Praiſe, therefore is it ſo lofty and ſo moving.

But alas! we ſpeak in vain! The Men who are bold enough to ſlight a Duty of this Rank and Character, will eaſily ſlight every thing that can be offer'd to bring 'em to it. All we can ſay to 'em is, that as God made 'em for his Glory, ſo, whether they will render it to him or not, he will certainly ſerve the Ends of that Glory upon 'em, one way or another. And therefore, if they will not freely Praiſe him for his Goodneſs in this World, they ſhall ſurely, whether they will or no, contribute to the Praiſe of his Juſtice in the Next.

Thus have I attempted to ſet out the great Reaſonableneſs of this Duty, and to ſtir You up to the Practice of it. And certainly, it was never more reaſonable, than on This Occaſion, when we commemorate ſuch Paſt Mercies, and feel ſuch Preſent Ones. The Reſtoration of the Monarchy, and of all thoſe Bleſſings in Church and State, that came along with it; The Re-eſtabliſhment of the Beauty of Praiſe in

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our Sanctuary; The Return of Peace and Plenty; Of Learning, and all the Arts of Civil Life; The Reducing us from Confusion and Rage into Order and Friendliness, and making Us a Nation at Unity in it self; Lovely at home, and Terrible abroad: These were such sound and substantial Blessings, as will wear well; and, though done a great while ago, will yet deserve a great while hence a Place in our Calendars. Neither Love to our Country, nor the Honour we bear to Those who Rule over Us; neither Our Gratitude to God, nor our Good-will towards Men will suffer such Wonders of Providence to slip out of our Minds; or the Day, in which they were brought about, easily to grow Old upon Us.

The Benefits we then receiv'd were indeed exceeding great, and would justly claim a larger Share in our Present Thoughts, had not the Goodness of God taken 'em off a little from thence, by calling 'em to the Acknowledgment of New Loving Kindnesses.

For behold what Glorious Things the Lord has again done for Us! Bleſſing Their Majeſties Forces with a great and ſignal Victory over the moſt haughty and inſolent of Enemies. A Victory—ſo Early, ſo Compleat, and ſo Cheaply purchaſed, that we have Reaſon to hope, it may fix the Fortune of the War, and put an End to the Deſtructions of the Deſtroyer: To whom, we truſt, God has now ſaid, as he did once to the Sea it ſelf. *Hitherto ſhalt Thou come, and no further; and here ſhall thy proud Waves be ſtay'd.*

Bleſſed be God! who did not utterly caſt out our Prayers, and our Supplications: but delaid only to Anſwer 'em, till a Day of Salvation, till an acceptable Time; when the Mercy would be dearer to Us, and his Goodneſs more remarkably ſeen in the beſtowing it!

When we were Alarm'd with Invaſions from abroad, and Conſpiracies at home; when Men threatned to ſwallow us up quick: When Succeſs was now ſo requiſite to preſerve the Honour of the Nation, to ſupport Their Majeſties Throne, and

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to ſtrengthen the Hands of Their Allies; Then did He appear, and own Our Cauſe; Then was the God of Hoſts, our Strength, and our Shield.

Surely, *There is no End of that Goodneſs*, which continues thus to purſue us! Which vouchſafes to eſtabliſh to Us, and to our Poſterity thoſe Bleſſings, under which we have been ſo unthankful, and ſo ingrateful already! and to give us freſh Opportunities of Praiſe, which I hope we ſhall make better uſe of!

Let us therefore, *Offer unto God Thanksgiving*! and not That only, but *Ourſelves* alſo, our Souls and Bodies, to be a Reaſonable, Holy and Lively Sacrifice: Let us render him the Fruit of our Lips, and the Obedience of our Lives! that theſe Bleſſings may not prove a Curſe to us; but that He may ſtill be Our God, and we may be His People!

To him with the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour, Praiſe and Glory, henceforth and for Evermore. Amen.

FINIS.